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**Statement of Governor Haley Barbour on Senate Passage of the
“UpGrade” Education Reform Act of 2005**

February 8, 2005

“I am very grateful to Senate Education Chairman Mike Chaney and the entire State Senate today for passing “UpGrade” – the most comprehensive education reform package in Mississippi since 1982.

After four statewide education conferences last year, input from more than 1,000 state and national education leaders and more than 200 Mississippi teachers, and hard work by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, Mississippi is one step closer to substantially improving the way we educate our children.

Thanks to the Senate’s action, we are closer today to:

- paying teachers and schools for performance,
- freeing our high-performing districts from burdensome regulation,
- putting more state resources toward low-performing districts,
- providing more opportunities for educational innovation in our schools,
- holding parents more accountable for student discipline problems,
- encouraging more child care centers to provide educational content,
- and providing more high school students access to workforce training and college credits.

I look forward to working with House Education Chairman Bubba Pierce and the members of the House of Representatives in taking the final step to making “UpGrade” a reality in Mississippi education.”

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